

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HAVANA 00207 240203Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EA-10 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07 INT-05
L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05
SS-15 STR-06 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
SOE-02 OMB-01 DOE-11 /125 W
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R 231551Z JAN 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1023
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, CU
SUBJECT: CASTRO ADMITS PROBLEMS IN SUGAR HARVEST

REF: HAVANA 0115

1. IN SPEECH AT PUERTO CARUPANO, LAS TUNAS PROVINCE, JANUARY 20, FIDEL CASTRO ADMITTED FOR FIRST TIME THAT 1978 SUGAR HARVEST HAS RUN INTO PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF HEAVY DECEMBER AND JANUARY RAINS. CASTRO SAID THAT CALCULATION OF AVAILABLE CANE HAD LED TO PLANNED PRODUCTION INCREASE OF 500 TO 700 THOUSAND TONS. (COMMENT: BASED ON CUBAN CLAIM TO HAVE PRODUCED 6.345 MILLION TONS IN 1977, THIS MAKES PLANNED PRODUCTION 6.8 TO 7.0 MILLION TONS.) CASTRO SAID THAT 200 THOUSAND TONS OF THIS PLANNED INCREASE WAS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN TUNAS PROVINCE, BUT, DUE TO RAINS, PRODUCTION IN THAT PROVINCE HAS SO FAR ONLY REACHED 72 PERCENT OF PLANNED GOALS. CASTRO ALSO ALLOWS THAT PRODUCTION IN NEIGHBORING HOLGUIN PROVINCE IS SERIOUSLY LAGGING. HE URGES MAJOR EFFORT BEFORE ONSET OF SPRING RAINS TO BOOST PRODUCTION LEVELS.

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PAGE 02 HAVANA 00207 240203Z

2. COMMENT: CONSIDERING THAT FIRST YEAR ISA QUOTA WILL BE ABOUT 2 MILLION TONS, AND THAT CUBA WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO SELL ALL OF ITS 650 THOUSAND TON SOCIALIST, NON-COMECON QUOTA (DUE TO ABSENCE OF YUGOSLAV PURCHASES), MAXIMUM CUBAN SUGAR NEEDS--EXCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL SOVIET PURCHASES AND ISA STOCK ACCUMULATION

REQUIREMENTS--WOULD BE ABOUT 6.3 MILLION
TONS. THIS, COUPLED WITH RISING PRICE OF SUGAR, MAY EXPLAIN
WHY FIDEL, IN HIS SPEECH, SEEMED REASONABLY CALM ABOUT
APPARENT SHORTFALLS IN PRODUCTION. IN ANY EVENT, LAG IN
AVAILABILITY OF CUBAN SUGAR MAY TAKE PRESSURE OFF SOVIETS
TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL SUGAR ABOVE 2.7 MILLION TONS SPECIFIED
IN CUBAN-SOVIET AGREEMENT.
GLASSMAN

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Message Attributes

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